DC
THE SAGA OF THE
SWAMP THING
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BY
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BISSETTE '84
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"THE FROZEN TABLEAU, CRYSTALLIZED IN TIME, HANGS POISED, LIKE SPILLED BLOOD YET TO REACH THE GROUND.

"THE TERROR OF THE AUDIENCE TURNS TO MIME; THEIR SCREAMING MASKS MAKE NOT THE SLIGHTEST SOUND.

"A GOURMET OF DESPAIR, IT GIVES ME PLEASURE TO CHEW UPON THIS INSTANT AT MY LEISURE.

"SEE HERE, THE POOR BEWILDERED ORPHAN-BOY, WHOSE PARENTS SET THE MONKEY-DEVIL FREE, PERCEIVING MAGIC AS SOME PARLOR-TOY. THEIR LIVES WERE FORFEIT, AND HIS SANITY.

"AND HERE BEHOLD THAT PESTILENTIAL APE; ITS GRIP UPON HIS ARM COULD NOT BE FASTER.

"ITS NAME IS FEAR. LIKE FEAR IT ALTERS SHAPE, AND YET IT LICKS HIS HAND AND CALLS HIM MASTER.

"AS FOR THESE SHRIEKING STATUES, I'LL NOT WEEP. THEY'LL PERISH AS THEY'VE LIVED: DAZED, WITLESS SHEEP...

"...IN SLAUGHTERHOUSES FAR BEYOND THEIR KEN. I SHED NO TEAR FOR THOSE THAT DIE UNSHRIVEN...

"...FOR THEY ARE MEN.

"JUST MEN.

"AND WHAT ARE MEN BUT CHARIOTS OF WRATH...

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"...BY DEMONS DRIVEN!"

AN ALAN MOORE WRITER

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Presentation

"THE BATTLE IS ENGAGED, THE MOMENT GONE. DRAW BACK THE CURTAIN! DIM THE LIGHTS...

"PLAY ON!"

SWAMP THING

created by LEN WEIN and BERNI WRIGHTSON

ALEC, THOSE *CREATURES*...

OH, GOD. THIS HOME'S FULL OF *CHILDREN*. I'M SUPPOSED TO LOOK *AFTER* THEM.

LOOKING AFTER THEM'S MY *JOB*.

THE *MONKEY'S* GOT HOLD OF *PAUL*...

WE'VE GOT TO...

"...DO SOMETHING?"

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

RRUUUUK?

RHHRREEEEEEEK!

THE SWAMP, ABBY...

RUN... FOR THE... SWAMP!

KK-K-KRAK!

BUT YOU... WHAT ABOUT YOU?

THERE ARE THOSE TWO MONSTERS, AND...

SSKRRRETCH!

THREE MONSTERS. RUN!

"ABBY...?"

ABBY?

WH-WHERE *ARE* YOU, ABBY?

OFF WITH THE *KIDS*, I BET. ALWAYS OFF WITH THE KIDS...

IT WAS *ME* WHO NEEDED YOU. IT WAS...

QUEMA SHAVE

HUH? DO YOU HEAR THAT? THAT *BUZZING*? IS THAT A FLY..?

I *KNOW* WE ARGUED, BUT I WAS SORRY... I CAME AFTER YOU, TO *HELP*. A LITTLE *DRUNK*... CURVE TOO FAST...

WHOSE IS ALL THIS BLOOD, ABBY?

OH GOD, OH MOTHER, I DON'T WANT TO DIE...

YOU DON'T *HAVE* TO.

AAH.

I CAN SEE THAT I HAVE ALARMED YOU. PLEASE... FEEL FREE TO SCREAM IF YOU WANT TO.

THERE IS NO ONE TO HEAR, AND I SHALL STILL BE HERE WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED.

ZZZZZZ

"DAMN YOU TO HELL, MATT CABLE."

DAMN YOU FOR MAKING ME DO THIS ON MY OWN.

PAUL, TRY TO RUN...

PLEASE, PAUL...

THE MONKEY KING. IT CAME.

M-O-N-K-E-Y K-I-

YES, OKAY! I KNOW HOW TO SPELL MONKEY KING.!!

OH NO.

OH, LOOK, PAUL... I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO SHOUT.

PAUL, I'M SCARED TOO.

THUS FEAR BREEDS ANGER, WHICH IN TURN BREEDS FEAR. THIS CANCER MUST BE CURBED...

...MY CHOICE IS CLEAR.

THE APE IS BATTLING WITH THE THING OF MOSS, HIS SMALL, RELUCTANT MASTER QUITE FORGOT.

SOON IT WILL PAUSE AND REALIZE ITS LOSS. ITS HOWL WILL COME TOO LATE, AND MATTERS NOT.

BY THEN, THE CHILD THAT *BINDS* IT TO THIS PLANE SHALL BE *CONSUMED*...

NO! YOU CAN'T...

SHUK!

...AND NOTHING SHALL REMAIN.

FEAR NOT, FOR PAIN IS SHORT AND DEATH IS LONG, THOUGH AS TO WHAT DREAMS FOLLOW, LEGENDS *VARY*.

SSRRIP

THEY ALSO SUFFER, THOSE THAT DO NO WRONG. YOUR DEATH IS *SMALL*...

...BUT IT IS NECESS...

EH?

KRUNCH

SO...

...YOU ESCAPED THE MONKEY'S FESTERING CLUTCH. PERHAPS YOU HAD NO *FEAR* FOR IT TO USE?

I'LL OWN, IT DOES NOT INTEREST ME MUCH.. YOU PLAY DICE WITH A *DEMON*, SIR...

...AND LOSE.

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

SQUK KRAKT
PNOP
PUMP PUR PAPO
CHRRUTT

DON'T WORRY, PAUL.

DON'T WORRY.

DON'T WORRY.

THE BIG GREEN MAN, HE'S MY FRIEND. HE WON'T LET ANYTHING HURT US.

YOU'LL SEE. YOU'LL...

SPLAT

"CAN'T SCREAM ANYMORE?

"GOOD."

PERHAPS YOU'LL LISTEN TO MY PROPOSAL NOW, MR. CABLE...

...OR MAY I CALL YOU "MATTHEW"?

OH NO.

OH NO.

OH GOD...

YOUR BODY IS QUITE SMASHED, I'M AFRAID. I FEAR THAT YOU WILL BLEED TO DEATH WITHIN THE HOUR...

...UNLESS YOU PREFER NOT TO, IN WHICH CASE I MAY BE ABLE TO HELP.

YOU'RE NOT REAL... YOU'RE AN HALLUCINATION...

BUT OF COURSE I'M AN HALLUCINATION. SO THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, IS THERE?

OH ABBY... ABBY...

NO.

NO, I GUESS NOT.

PLEASE... I WANT TO LIVE. I HAVE A WIFE...

YES, OF COURSE YOU DO. OF COURSE...

NOW, IF YOU WANT TO SEE HER AGAIN, I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING RATHER UNPLEASANT FIRST.

IT'S ALWAYS THE WAY WITH THESE THINGS, AND IT WON'T TAKE LONG...

WH-WHAT SHOULD I DO?

WELL, YOU'LL HAVE TO OPEN YOUR MOUTH AS WIDE AS IT WILL GO...

OH YES, THAT'S SPLENDID..

THAT'S JUST RIGHT.

NOW, THIS NEXT BIT WILL BE THE WORST...

"THERE.

"THAT WASN'T SO BAD, WAS IT?

"NOW FOR MY SIDE OF THE BARGAIN...

ZZZZ

WHATEVER YOU'RE AFRAID OF...

SEE PAGE FOLLOWING

"...THAT'S WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE."

NNNUGH..

AAA...BEEE...

AAAA-BEEE...

I... LLUHV... YUUU...

AAAA-BEEEE...

NO! LEAVE HER ALONE!

YOU KILLED MY MOM AND YOU KILLED MY DAD, BUT...

...BUT I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU!!

PUH...

PUUHHH..

PUH...

PAW.. LEEEE...

IT'SSS M'MO-MMEEE...

NO! YOU'RE NOT MY MOM! MY MOM IS D-E-A-D!

YOU'RE A SCUMMY LITTLE MONKEY AND YOU DON'T SCARE ME!

YOU'RE A LIAR!

YOU JUST PRETEND TO BE THINGS!

WELL, YOU CAN PRETEND TO BE A SNAKE OR A WOLF OR A MONSTER AND I DON'T CARE!

YOU'RE NOT FRIGHTENING ME!

LITTLE KITTENS ARE SCARIER THAN YOU!

YOU'RE NOT AS SCARY AS A MOUSE! NOT EVEN AS SCARY AS...

...AS A BUG.

AAH...

FEAR, NO MATTER HOW SMALL IT HAS GROWN...

...RETAINS A CERTAIN FLAVOR OF ITS OWN.

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CONTINUED ON 24th PAGE FOLLOWING

THE APE IS CAGED. IT SEEMS WHERE DEMONS FAIL AND MONSTERS FALTER...

...ANGELS MAY PREVAIL.

YOU HAVE MY THANKS. ONE *WARNING* I'LL AFFORD:

YOUR PARENTS FREED THE MONKEY WITH A CHARM SPELLED OUT IN RANDOM LETTERS ON A BOARD. WAS THERE SOME *FURTHER* FIEND THAT NUDGED THEIR ARM?

THE *ANSWER*, MADAM, IS FOR *YOU* TO KNOW.

I'VE SAID TOO MUCH...

MY JOB IS DONE.

I GO.

WAIT!

WHAT DID YOU MEAN?

ABBY...?

ALEC, HE WAS TALKING ABOUT *ME!* I'VE GOT TO KNOW WHAT HE *MEANT*...

CAN YOU TAKE PAUL BACK TO *ELYSIUM LANAIS*?

BUT...

PLEASE, ALEC...

THIS IS SOMETHING *IMMORTANT*. I CAN *FEEL* IT.

I'VE GOT TO *KNOW*, ALEC.

SCARED?

NO.

NOT ANYMORE.

CAN I GO HOME NOW, PLEASE?

WERE YOU SCARED WHEN THE MONKEY KING JUMPED ON YOU?

WHAT DID YOU SEE?

I... SAW FIRE...

ONCE I... KNEW SOMEONE ..WHO DIED... BY FIRE. .

AND YOU WERE AFRAID?

YES...

...A LITTLE...

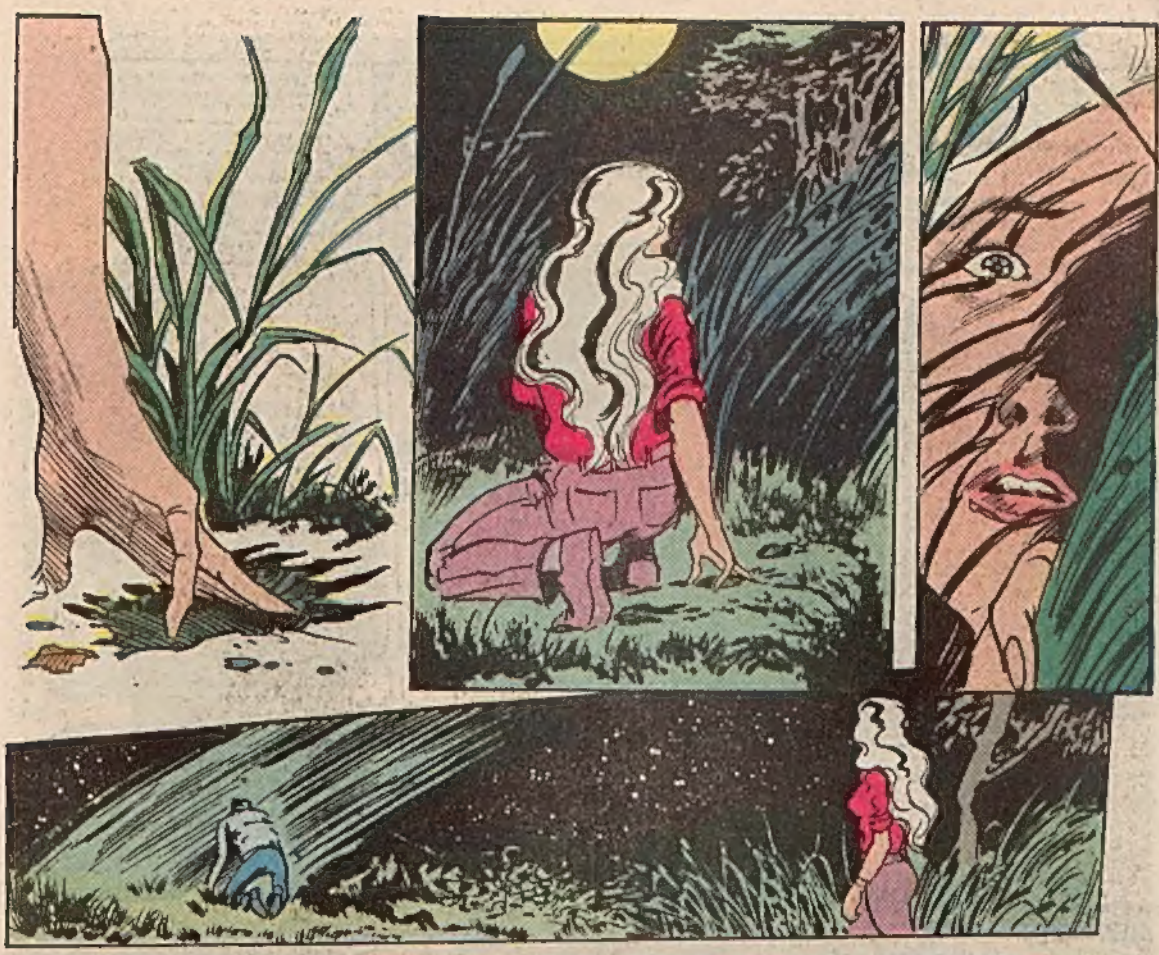
THAT'S GOOD. I MEAN, Y'KNOW. IT MAKES ME FEEL BETTER.

I MEAN, IF EVEN MONSTERS GET SCARED SOMETIMES, THEN...

WELL, THEN IT ISN'T SO BAD, IS IT?

NO...

IT ISN'T SO BAD...



MRS. CABLE...?
YOU MUST... FORGIVE ME. I AM... INDISPOSED...
YOU...
YOU AND THAT DEMON.
YOU'RE THE SAME PERSON.
YES...
YES, I SUPPOSE WE ARE...

IT HASN'T *ALWAYS* BEEN THIS WAY. ONCE WE WERE *VERY* DIFFERENT, OUR PSYCHES CONSTANTLY AT WAR...

WE STRUCK A *BARGAIN*... A SPIRITUAL *COMPROMISE*. WE WOULD GROW MORE *LIKE* EACH OTHER. THERE WOULD BE A BALANCE...

...BUT A BARGAIN WITH A *DEMON* IS NO BARGAIN AT ALL. DEMONS *CHEAT*. IT IS THEIR *NATURE*.

OH, YES, *I* HAVE GROWN MORE LIKE *ETRIGAN*.

AND HE...

...HE *TOO* HAS GROWN MORE LIKE *ETRIGAN*.

HE HAS MERELY BORROWED A LITTLE OF MY *INTELLECT*, MY *VOCABULARY*. HE HAS NOT CHANGED. WE ARE STILL AT WAR...

...AND I FEAR THAT I AM *LOSING*.

PLEASE...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND ALL OF THIS, BUT...

THE *DEMON*. HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT ME. A *WARNING*...

A WARNING?

I CANNOT HELP YOU, MRS. CABLE.

ETRIGAN KNOWS THINGS THAT I DO NOT. IF HE *WARNED* YOU, YOU'D BEST STAY ON YOUR GUARD. SOMETIMES A DEMON MAY OFFER WORDS OF *WISDOM*. AND SOMETIMES...

...SOMETIMES THEY EVEN TELL THE *TRUTH*.

ELYSIUM LAWNS
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

"ALONG ITS EASTERN EDGE
THE SKY'S AFLAME.
HE SKULKS BACK TO HIS MUD,
HIS FERNS AND STONES...

"IS IT UNEASE HE FEELS,
WITHOUT A NAME,
OR MERELY AUTUMN
GNAWING AT HIS BONES?

"THE THINGS OF SHADOW
VANISH WITH THE NIGHT,
WORSE HORRORS STILL
ARE HERALDED.

CONCLUDED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

"...BY LIGHT."

HELLO, ABBY.

I CAME OUT AFTER YOU. I WANTED TO APOLOGIZE.

I WANTED TO HELP.

NEED A RIDE?

*THUS MOLLIFIED SHE GOES, HARSH WORDS FORGIVEN, DOWN NIGHWAYS IN THE DARK...

"...BY DEMONS DRIVEN."

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED WITH AWE & AFFECTION TO JACK KIRBY

NEXT THE BURIAL